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ABSTRACT

Preschool educators developed a library media learning and play center to enable children to "experience" a library; establish positive attitudes about the library; and encourage respect for self, others, and property. The center had the following areas: check-in and check-out desk, quiet reading section, computer center, listening center, video corner, and dress-up area (where children could dress for role plays). Teachers talked with children about how libraries work and how books should be handled. Teachers also conducted several activities with students, including learning how to: role play, use computers for both creative and academic pursuits, use the library, act out stories, and write and illustrate a book. From the project, teachers learned that: (1) as children were less tired, they used the center more appropriately earlier in the day; (2) teachers needed to be familiar with the center in order to facilitate its use; (3) children did role play, check out books, and take them back to their classrooms; and (4) children enjoyed being in the center. Seven activity plans for use with the library play center are included. (JW)

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ED 387 232

LIBRARY MEDIA LEARNING AND PLAY CENTER

OBJECTIVES

To create an attractive, interesting and enjoyable library play center for 2 year olds and up. By having the children role play visits to a "library", we would like:

- **to enable children to "experience" a library**
  (children learn about going to a library)
- **to establish a positive attitude about the library**
  (children see the library as an enjoyable place to go)
- **to encourage respect for self, others and property**
  (to reinforce proper behavior toward people and property)

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ENVIRONMENT

After visiting area libraries, we came up with several ideas for areas or centers to put in our "library". In addition to shelves of books to be available for check-out, we also included the following:

- **Check-in and check-out desk area**
  (where children can role play the part of the librarian)
- **Quiet reading area with cushions and pillows**
  (where children can browse through books or be read to)
- **Computer center**
  (where children can play computer games)
- **Listening center**
  (where children can listen to stories on tape)
- **Video corner**
  (where children can view short educational videos)
- **Dress-up area**
  (where children can dress up for role play)

The "library" was set up in a self-contained, carpeted room. The various areas were set up in different parts of the room. The dress-up area was accomplished by stringing clothesline on a play structure in one corner of the room and hanging the dress-up clothes with clothespins. The check-in/out desk was set up near the shelves of books, as was the quiet reading area. In addition, we were able to use a padded bathtub (filled with pillows) as an additional quiet reading area. A writing board was hung within reach of the children and two typewriters were placed in the room for the children to explore. Each area of the room was labeled with a sign to indicate its use such as "Computer Corner", "Listening Center", etc.

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MATERIALS

The following is a list of materials used to furnish the playcenter:

- -- Several small tables and chairs
- -- Pads and pillows
- -- Books (with card pockets in the back for "checking-in/out")
- -- Puzzles and games
- -- Puppets and stuffed animals
- -- Dress-up clothes (including hats, purses, shoes, etc.)
- -- Computers (2) with various software
- -- Computer printer with paper (for printing out pictures)
- -- Cassette player with various cassette tapes and 2 headsets
- -- TV and VCR with various videos
- -- Typewriters (2) and typing paper
- -- Dry erase markers and eraser for writing board
- -- Paper, pencils, markers, date stamps and stamp pads for desk area

ESTABLISHING LIMITS

After much discussion it was decided that small groups (no more than four at a time) would be allowed to use the playcenter, at least in the beginning. Smaller groups allow the teachers to interact one on one with the children and to initiate role play in the library. Once the children are comfortable with the "library" and its limits, larger groups could be taken. However, no more than two children should be in any area at a time. It was decided that the children could "check-out" the library books, but only to take them back to the classroom area. This was to maintain some control over the supply of books that are available. A list of "Library Limits" for the children was printed up and posted on the "library" door:

Library Limits

Let's Listen
Let's Speak Softly
Let's Walk
Be gentle with books
Be gentle with people

INTRODUCTION

The Teachers helped to prepare the children for their first visit to our "library" by talking with them about books (and how books should be handled) and about libraries in general. Some of the teachers read the story I Can Be a Librarian by Carol Greene to the children.

ACTIVITIES

Several activities were planned for the children the first two weeks the center was open. Activity plans are attached at the end of this report.

EVALUATION

We learned several things while working with the children (and teachers) in the playcenter. Most children did better in the center early in the day. They were not as tired and used the center in more appropriate ways at this time of day. Teachers need to understand and be familiar with the playcenter before it is used. This allows them to become active participants in the center and help facilitate proper use of the center. We discovered that children do role play (as librarians, helpers, patrons, etc.), they do "check-out" books to take back to the classroom, and they do enjoy being in the center!

EXTENSION

A visit to a local library would not only give the children an experience on which to base their role playing, but would also be an opportunity for parents to explore a library with their children.

Activity Plan

Theme: **First Visit to the Library** Class: **Toddler/Multi-Age**
Center: **Library Media Learning & Play Center** Week of:

Materials

All materials established in the center
VCR and tapes (ABC tape)
Tapes for the Listening Center

Child's Role/Procedure

Children are listeners as they hear what is available for them in the library.
Children will learn what they have access to and they will learn the library limits (behavior expectations, how to treat books & materials, etc.).
Children will be library patrons as they will be given an opportunity to explore the library.

Teacher's Role/Questions

Teacher will act as guide as she introduces what is available in the library.
Teacher will explain and introduce each area separately.
Teacher will explain and then reinforce the limits of the library.
Teacher will establish a concept of "2" at each center.

Adaptations/Comments

This first visit to the library was preceded by a story read to the children about a library, I Can Be a Librarian by Carol Greene. Teachers talked to the children about what a library is and what is available for them at a library. The library limits were explained before the children entered the library. A "quiet" tone was also established before entering the room. Each area of the library was introduced separately and children were instructed as to the use of the materials available.

Activity Plan

Theme: **Story Hour at the Library** Class: **Toddler/Multi-Age**
Center: **Library Media Learning & Play Center** Week of:

Materials

All materials established in the center
Books based on "bear" theme: Brown Bear, Brown Bear
Polar Bear, Polar Bear

Brown paper bags
Construction paper cut outs of "bear" faces, eyes & noses
Glue

Child's Role/Procedure

Children are listeners as they hear the story being read.
Children are participants as they chant along to Brown Bear, Brown Bear.
Children are artists as they glue eyes and noses onto their bear puppets.
Children act out stories using their puppets.

Teacher's Role/Questions

Teacher is a story teller as she reads the story to the children and talks about it.
Teacher will assist the children when they make their puppets.
Teacher will guide the children in role playing with their puppets.

Adaptations/Comments

Before the children began this activity, the teacher explained to them that most libraries have a "story hour" where the librarian reads stories to children. Sometimes there is an art project associated with the story. Today the teacher plays the part of the librarian and will read a story to the children. After the initial reading, the children were asked to "read along" as the teacher read the story again. She then assisted the children in making their bear puppets. Children were encouraged to use their puppets to retell the story.

Activity Plan

Theme: **A Visit to the Curriculum Center Library** Class: **Toddler/Multi-Age**
Center: **Library Media Learning & Play Center** Week of:

Materials

All materials established in the center

Child's Role/Procedure

Children will be observers as they take a trip to a "big" library.
Children will be listeners as they hear the teacher explain what materials are found in a library.
Children will be able to role play what they have learned in the library center.

Teacher's Role/Questions

Teacher will act as a guide as she leads the children on a trip through the library.
Teacher will explain what is available in the library and how it is used.
Teacher will show the children how to "check-out" a book at the desk.
Teacher will explain and reinforce the limits of the library.

Adaptations/Comments

The purpose of this activity was to show the children a "real" library. Before we went on this walk we explained to the children that we were going to show them a real library. They were told that adults may be using the library and that they were to be very quiet during our visit. They were instructed not to touch anything but were only to look at what was in the room. The teachers led the students through the library, pointing out the books, etc. The children were shown the check-out desk and the teachers demonstrated how to "check-out" a book. After our visit, the children were allowed to spend some time in the library center and encouraged to role play as the librarian and patrons.

ECRC Activity Plan

Theme: What do People do in a Library? **Class:** Multi-Age
Center: Library Media Learning and Play Center

Materials

Book: *I Can be a Librarian* by Carol Green
All materials established in the center.
ECRC "Library cards"

Child's Role/Procedure

Children review library limits.
Children listen as library roles are explained through the illustrations in the book.
Children share their knowledge about libraries and their experiences in libraries.
Children explore various parts of the library center.
Children engage in dramatic play as they receive "library cards" and check out books.

Teacher's Role

Teacher models appropriate library behavior as library limits are reviewed.
Teacher reads the book *I Can be a Librarian* using the illustrations to explain what people do in a library.
Teacher explains how to use the computers and listening center and provides assistance as needed.
Teacher guides children in dramatic play as they look for books and use their library cards to check out books.

ECRC Activity Plan

Theme: Going to a Library **Class:** Multi-Age
Center: Library Media Learning and Play Center

Materials

8 1/2 X 11" paper any color — 1 sheet 1 child; each child's name is on 1 sheet.
Crayons, markers, pens, pencils, stamps etc.

Child's Role/Procedures

Write (illustrate) their own book.
Draw pictures which adult will label.
Each day they will go to the "library" and will draw a new page for their book!

Teacher's Role/Questions

Label children's pictures.
Encourage each child to participate.
Take a picture of each child alone involved in activity — this will go on the cover of their book.
Have children help design a cover page that can be duplicated and will accommodate picture.
Bind each child's book.

Adaptations/Comments

Each week try to acquire 1 page from each child.
Present them with a special gift of a book at the end of the semester.

ECRC Activity Plan

Theme: Role playing in the library **Class:** Toddler/Multi-Age
Center: Library Media Learning and Play Center

Materials

Dress-up clothes (attractive to the children)
Books with card pockets and cards for checking in/out
Date stamps/stamp pads
Pens, pencils, markers
Typewriter with typing paper
Library cards with a place for child to write name

Child's Role/Procedures

Children can dress up if they want to.
Children can try date stamps with stamp pads.
Children can try typewriter.
Children will be given library cards and can write their names on them.
Children will increase their knowledge about libraries by learning about library roles and how to check out books.
Children will gain social skills as they learn to negotiate roles in sociodramatic play.

Teacher's Role/Questions

Teachers will encourage children to dress up.
Teacher can act as a participant briefly to introduce children to the various library roles — librarian, patrons (e.g. Mom, Dad, Child) and library helpers.
The teacher can help children begin to engage in these roles. For instance, the teacher can say, "I am the librarian. Does anyone have a book they want to take out of the library?" When the teacher finishes checking out the book, the teacher can ask if anyone else would like to be the librarian.
The teacher becomes an observer.

Adaptations/Comments

Be sure to let children dress up as what they want to be. This will teach them that everyone can be a library patron — movie stars, construction workers, doctors, etc. This is especially important for toddlers who do not yet engage in sociodramatic play.

ECRC Activity Plan

Theme: Using computers in the library media center **Class:** Multi-Age
Center: Library Media Learning and Play Center

Materials

Hardware:

A computer and printer are necessary to fulfill this activity.
The specifications of ECRC equipment:

2 Macintosh SE computers - both with 2MB RAM, two 800K floppy drives, mouse, keyboard
1 ImageWriter II printer, ink ribbon, cable
Printer paper (tractor feed preferred)

Software:

Age appropriate software is needed to fulfill this activity.
The recommended programs which ECRC uses:

System disk for each computer
Kid Pix for one Mac
First Letters and Words for the 2nd Mac

Child's Role/Procedure

Children get hands on experience with computers for both creative and academic applications.
Children choose either to play an educational game or draw with an art program.
Children print out their work and tear it from the printer properly.

Teachers Role/Questions

Prepare Computers:
Someone familiar with the system must check to see if the computer has the proper settings, software, and cables to run the programs and print work.
Setting the system software to automatically run the programs each time the computer is switched on will invite the most use by children and teachers with lower levels of computer proficiency. Otherwise, train all teachers and volunteers how to start each program.
Teacher switches computer on. (Usually because it is hard to reach and can be hazardous for the computer to be switched on or off improperly)
Teacher may allow children to start programs and turn on printer themselves.

Prepare Children:
Ask children what computers are used for?
Ask if computers belong in the library.
Describe that people use computers to learn new things, and do their work.
Explain that the children can also learn new things and print their own "computer work".
Describe computer terms in a playful way. Ask students if they see a mouse anywhere in the room., then explain what a computer mouse is.
Explain the difference between a computer and a printer.

Activities with software:

Kid Pix:
Show individual children how they may draw, "just like on paper".
Explain the UNDO function and how they can use it after making a "mistake" (Undo is the little face at the bottom of the tool bar on the left side of the screen).
Draw something briefly, then ask child to either erase it or add something to it.
Let child draw independently.
Tell children that when they are finished, you will show them how to print.
Listen and respond to expressions such as "I wish I could...,"and, "Why can't I do...?"

First Letters and Words:
Choose an appropriate activity (Dinosaur, recommended for youngest), and allow child to operate the mouse and keyboard independently.
Ask child what the bear character is asking them to do.
Teacher prompts when child seems unaware of which area to click on to get a response.

Printing:
Explain that when they are finished, you will show them how to print.
Explain that the printer must be turned on, then show them where the power button is.
Turn on the printer and make sure the green light marked "select" is lit. If not, press the select button.
Press the "Apple" key together with the "P" key. (Or choose 'Print' from the 'File' menu.) A print dialog box will appear.
Press return to begin printing.
Allow child to rip the paper appropriately on the perforation.

Shutdown:
To shut down, follow the shutdown instructions for your own computer. In all cases you must wait for all disk activity to stop before turning off the power.

Adaptations/Comments

Children will need help keeping the mouse pointed "North" and flat on the table. Children will frequently run out of space to roll the mouse. Show them that by picking it up and putting it in the middle of the pad, they will get more room to roll.

Try this Rub-through Game with ***Kid Pix:***

Click on the eraser in the side tool bar, then click on the question mark "?" on the bottom tool bar. This will load an invisible picture behind the screen. As the child "erases" across the screen, the hidden image "rubs" through and is visible.

Take turns making one sweep across the screen and then guessing what the partially visible picture might be. Take turns until child guesses correctly, or chooses to fill it in, or chooses to load another picture.

Clicking on the "?" will keep loading invisible pictures behind. If you want to create odd looking creatures like a fox with wings, then just keep clicking on the "?" between rubbings.